

the
**SUNDAY
TIMES**

SUNDAY
MARCH 23, 2025



FUN DAY TIMES



Enjoying 'Holi'

Pic. by M.A. Pushpa Kumara

COMPETITIONS

PAGE 2



WATER
PAGES 3 & 4

(ONLINE)



POETRY
PAGE 5

KIDS NEWS

PAGES 7 - 8

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Please send competition entries to:

Funday Times
C/O the Sunday Times
P.O. Box 1136, Colombo.
Or
8, Hunupitiya Cross Road,
Colombo 2.

Please note that competition entries are accepted by email.

Write the name of the competition and the date clearly

at the top of your entry and include the following details:

Full Name (including Surname).

Date of Birth, Address,

Telephone Number and School.

Please underline the name most commonly used.

All competition entries should be certified by a parent or guardian as your own work.

Competition entries without the full details requested above, will be disqualified.

Closing date for this week's competitions:

April 9, 2025

Telephone: 2479337/2479333

Email: fundaytimes1@gmail.com



In our online issue this week:

- **Page 5** – Poetry Day
- **Page 6** – Holi Festival
- **Page 7** – Kids' News
- **Page 8** – News in Pictures

Please log on to the Funday Times website on www.fundaytimes.lk or check out the Sunday Times epaper on www.sundaytimes.lk for additional pages of this week's Funday Times.



Avurudu Cover 2025

As the Sinhala and Tamil New Year approaches, it is time once again to think of the Funday Times Avurudu Cover. Would you like to send in a picture for our Avurudu Cover? If so, here's what you have to do.

Paint a picture to depict the traditions of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year and send it in to us. The painting should be on A 4 size paper.

You could use any type of paint, crayons or chalk.

Please make your picture bright and colourful.

All entries should be certified by a teacher or parent as your own work. Uncertified entries will not be entertained.

The best entry will be used for the cover of the Funday Times Avurudu issue. The winner will also receive a book voucher.

Wish you all happy painting!



Or



fundaytimes1@gmail.com

Closing Date: April 1, 2025



Read-a-Book and win a voucher from Vijitha Yapa Bookshop

Read any book of your choice and write briefly about it.

What we want is not just a summary of the story but your views on the book. The best account in the three age groups will be awarded book vouchers of Rs. 500 each from Vijitha Yapa Bookshop. Three winners will be selected each month.

Your account should not exceed 200 words. Please indicate word count, fill in the coupon and attach it to your entry.

Read-a-Book Competition

Name :

Date of birth :

Address :

School:

Tel:

Finished book on :

Read-a-Book for February

10 – 12 years

Sanjith Perera

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien



13 – 15 years

Ramesh Nileshkanth

Demigods and Magicians by Rick Riordan



Or



fundaytimes1@gmail.com



Ruzaiq Junkeer
14 years on March 26

Happy Birthday

Photographs of members and non-members between 4 – 15 years, for the birthday page, should reach us at least ten days before the birthday, along with a letter from a parent giving full details.

From a Funday Times Young Reporter

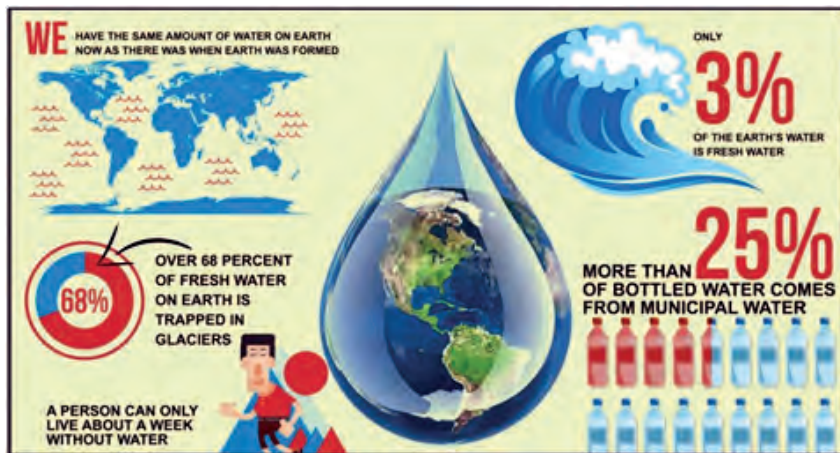
Water as a natural resource

Water is a resource that nature produces. When you hear the word 'water' you think of rivers, streams, ponds, wells etc. Water is commonly found in liquid state.

Does water exist only in the liquid state?

Ice (Solid) → Liquid Water (Liquid) → Water Vapour (Gas)

Water is a limited resource



Types of water based on salinity

Why is sea water salty? Dissolution of different things in water is a special property of water. Sodium chloride is one type of salt that is dissolved in sea water.

Water can be further categorized as fresh water, marine water and brackish water.



On the planet we live in
We call Earth
Water is limited
For people to consume
The key to protect me
Is very simple
All I ask from you is
Do not pollute me

Thewansa Herath (Grade 6)
St. Anthony's Girls' College, Kandy



Little students of Maple Kids International enjoyed Holi celebrations on March 14, 2025.

Pix by M. A. Pushpa Kumara

World Water Day

Compiled by Cecilia Hewavitharana

World Water Day has been observed annually on March 22 since 1993, to raise awareness about the importance of freshwater and need to combat the global water crisis.

Over 2 billion people around the world do not have access to clean water, causing adverse impacts to their lives.

The United Nations declared 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, with the first World Day for Glaciers to be held on March 21. The UN's efforts are aimed at raising global awareness of the critical connections between the cryosphere, climate change, the water cycle, economy, environment and society.

The theme of World Water Day 2025 is 'Glacier Preservation'. The meltwater of glaciers is an essential source of drinking water and is crucial for agriculture, industry, clean energy production and healthy ecosystems.

However, due to climate change, glaciers have been rapidly melting and resulting in changes to meltwater flows which are causing floods, droughts, landslides and rise in sea level. In 2023, over 600 gigatons of water had been lost from glaciers, which is the largest loss of mass, recorded in 50 years.

Why is preserving glaciers important?

- Glaciers, snowmelt and mountain run-off provide almost 2 billion people with water for drinking, agriculture and energy production. Around 70% of the world's freshwater is in the form of snow or ice.
- The increasing melting of glaciers greatly contributes to the rising of the sea level globally. For perspective, if the Antarctica ice sheet were to completely melt, the sea level will rise by 58 metres.



Thwaites Glacier, Antarctica



What are glaciers?

A glacier is an enormous body of ice, which forms on land and slowly moves downwards due to gravitational pull. It is created by snow that has become compressed into ice over centuries.

Glaciers are classified by their size (e.g. ice sheets, ice caps, valley glaciers and cirque glaciers), location, and thermal region.

Ice sheets are the largest type of glacier, with their thickness measuring over 4 km in East Antarctica and 3 km in Greenland.



Perito Moreno Glacier, Argentina

Glaciology: The scientific study of ice on landmasses.

Cryosphere: This refers to the frozen components of the Earth System at and below the land and ocean surface, such as snow cover, glaciers, ice sheets, ice shelves, icebergs, sea ice, lake ice, river ice, permafrost, seasonally frozen ground and solid precipitation.

How can glaciers be preserved?

To save glaciers, global warming must be curbed. To achieve this, global carbon emissions must be reduced. According to UNESCO, restricting global warming to 1.5°C could potentially save glaciers in two-thirds of World Heritage sites.

How can we help?

While reducing carbon emissions on a large scale can only be achieved with the collaboration of governments, industries and international organizations, we too can contribute through little acts, such as conserving our electricity usage (e.g. switching off fans and lights when leaving the room), which could collectively make a difference.

Sources: un.org, World Meteorological Organization, National Geographic, U.S. Geological Survey, Britannica

World Poetry Day

Compiled by Arrenga Nadaraja

World Poetry Day is a celebration of poetry and poets old and new, every year on March 21.

Poetry is a way to bring people together to share their stories, writing and creativity. Poetry is used to help understand another person and it is a great way to get to know new authors and new vocabulary.

In celebration of this day, here are a few well-known authors you might be interested in...

A. A. Milne the author of 'Winnie the Pooh' wrote a poem in his book, 'Now We Are Six' called "Us Two" written in 1927, about Pooh and his friend Christopher Robin that says having a friend by your side provides strength and courage.



It is also used to further understand someone's experience, for example, how they think, feel and what they are interested in.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) first 'adopted' World Poetry Day in 1999.

'Green Eggs and Ham' a famous poem by Dr. Seuss, an author and cartoonist, describes a person named Sam-I-am who asks a nameless man over and over again whether he would like to try Green Eggs and Ham, which he eventually does.

What you can learn from this poem is to not make your mind up about something before you get a chance to try it.



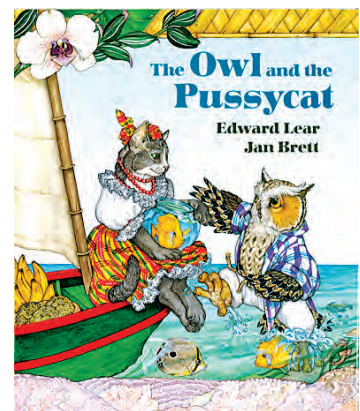
Lewis Carroll wrote 'How Doth the Little Crocodile' a poem that appeared in his book 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'.

It was written in 1865 and is about a crocodile who tries to call the fish in the water with his lovely smile and how they are trapped inside his mouth in the end.

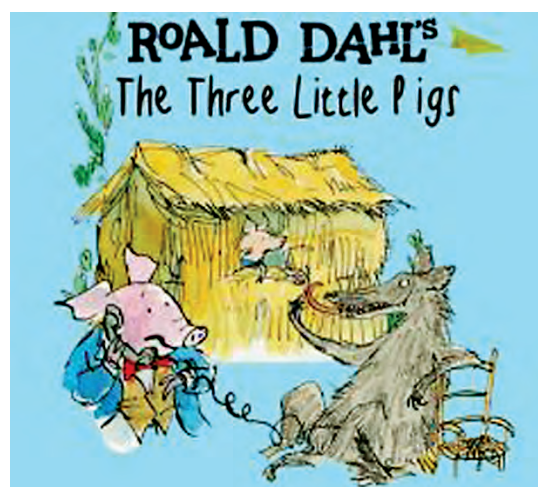
Some of the themes in the poem include the crocodile's cunning nature, his personality, mischief and deceptiveness.

'The Owl and the Pussy Cat' written by Edward Lear in 1871 is about an Owl and a Pussy Cat who embark on a journey. They travel together on a boat and confess their love for each other. These creatures meet a pig on their journey too, who helps them get a wedding ring.

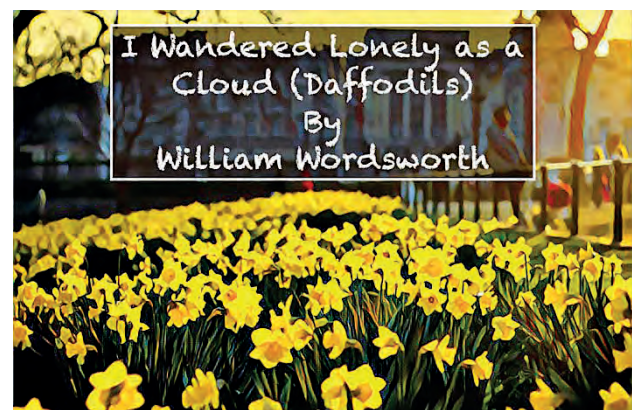
It is said that the author wrote this for a friend's daughter.



'The Three Little Pigs' written by Roald Dahl in 1982, is a poem that describes the pig's point of view, with a lot of rhyming words and focuses on innocence, cleverness and vulnerability.



'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' by William Wordsworth composed around 1804 - 1807 and published in 1807, is about daffodils and the poet's happiness when he saw them. The inspiration for the poem was Glencoyne Bay in the Lake District in the United Kingdom. Themes of this poem include nature, memory, daffodils, spirituality, pure joy and self reflection.



Sources:

poemanalysis.com/ vedantu.com/ poemhunter.com/ allpoetry.com/ familyfreindspoems.com/ drseussart.com/ storiesbd.com/
'The Children's Classic Poetry Collection' compiled by Nicola Baxter

St. Patrick's Day celebrations

March 18, 2025

Millions of people around the world joined in the celebration of Irish history and culture known as St. Patrick's Day.

It is a national holiday in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and parades and parties take place to mark the day.



Streets of Dublin in Ireland, were lined with thousands of young people. St. Patrick's Day is a public holiday so schools are closed.



In Toronto, Canada, a huge parade took place with this balloon sculpture of a traditional Irish Leprechaun.



In Melbourne, Australia, people joined Irish-themed parties.



The city of Chicago, USA, has its own 63-year-old tradition of dyeing the river bright green.



Dogs from the Irish community in Mexico City dressed up to commemorate the day.



London's Trafalgar Square was transformed into a huge Irish festival with live music and food stalls.



In New York City, annual parades attract thousands of spectators.

March 13, 2025

The Festival of Holi

The Hindu festival of Holi is celebrated by millions of people around the world.

Holi is known as the festival of love, colours and spring, and people throw coloured powder and water at each other to mark the occasion.

The two-day festival, which first began in India, also celebrates the Hindu god Krishna and the legend of Holika and Prahlad, which symbolises good overcoming evil.



The festival marks the beginning of spring, and it celebrates new life and love.

It is celebrated on the last full moon of the lunar month. This year that falls on March 14.

On the first day, people light bonfires and may also throw food such as popcorn, grains, coconut and chickpeas into a fire.

The second day is when the famous paint fight takes place.

In countries around the world huge crowds gather in the streets to throw paint at each other.

The coloured powder, called gulal, is thought to be a reference to Krishna throwing coloured water at people when he was a boy.



People from all backgrounds get involved in the fun and it is a chance for families to play tricks on each other.

As well as coloured powder, people sometimes throw water balloons and squirt water at each other with water pistols.

People also give presents and eat special food as part of the celebrations.

Source: CBBC Newsround

Scientists find a way to unlock water from moon dust

March 13, 2025

Water is crucial for setting up a human base on the Moon. But if researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences succeed, this will no longer be a hurdle. They have found a way to produce large amounts of water using the hydrogen in lunar soil.

For their study, Professor Junqiang Wang and his team used lunar soil samples collected during the Chang'e-5 mission in 2020. They used concave mirrors to focus sunlight onto the dirt, heating it to over 1,700°F (926°C). This intense heat caused a chemical reaction between the hydrogen and other elements in the soil, releasing water vapour. The vapour was then collected and condensed into liquid water.

Even more exciting, heating just one gram of the lunar soil produced



The Chang'e-5 mission collected lunar soil samples in 2020.

51 to 76 milligrams of water. Scaled up, one ton of Moon dirt could produce over 100 pounds (45 kg) of drinkable water. This is enough to sustain up to 50 astronauts daily.

Beyond drinking water, the extracted water could support plant growth in lunar greenhouses. This would ensure a reliable food source for

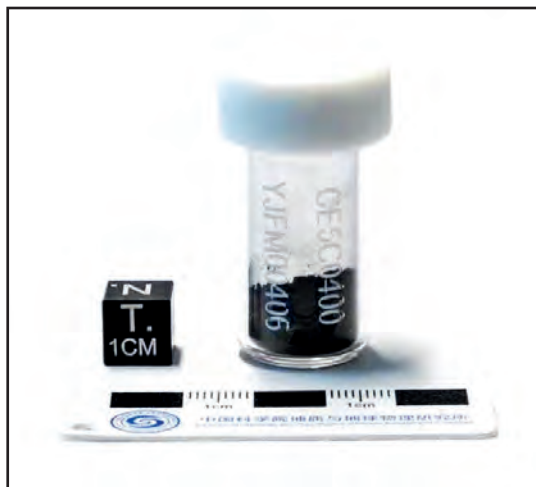
long-term missions. Additionally, astronauts could split water molecules into oxygen and hydrogen. The oxygen could be used for breathing and the hydrogen as rocket fuel.

The researchers, who published their findings in the journal Innovation in late 2024, still face some challenges.

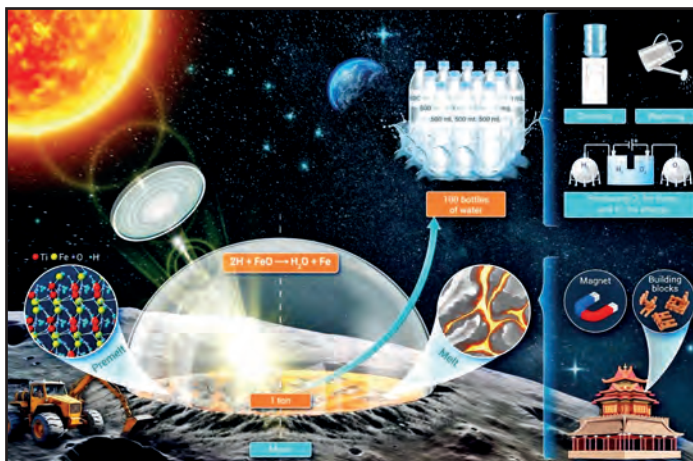
Since the method depends on solar energy, water extraction would only be possible during the two-week-long lunar day. It would completely halt during the lunar night, which lasts just as long.

Water production would also vary by location due to differences in soil composition.

The team hopes to test their method on samples collected from various lunar regions during future missions. If these hurdles can be overcome, the ability to produce water on the Moon could be a game-changer. It would reduce costs and make long-term lunar exploration more feasible.



A sample of the lunar soil collected during the Chang'e-5 mission.



The amount of water extracted could sustain up to 50 astronauts daily.

Source: DOGO News

Stranded astronauts return home

March 19, 2025

Astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore, after an unexpected stay at the International Space Station (ISS) for more than nine months, have returned to Earth and splashed down off the coast of the American state of Florida early on Wednesday.

A SpaceX Crew Dragon spaceship carrying the two astronauts, alongside American Nick Hague and Russian cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov,

streaked through the atmosphere before deploying parachutes for a gentle splashdown off the Florida coast at 3:27 am IST.

The two astronauts flew to the orbital lab in June last year, on what was supposed to be a days-long roundtrip to test Boeing's Starliner on its first crewed flight.



The spaceship, however, developed propulsion problems and was deemed unfit to fly back and later returned empty.

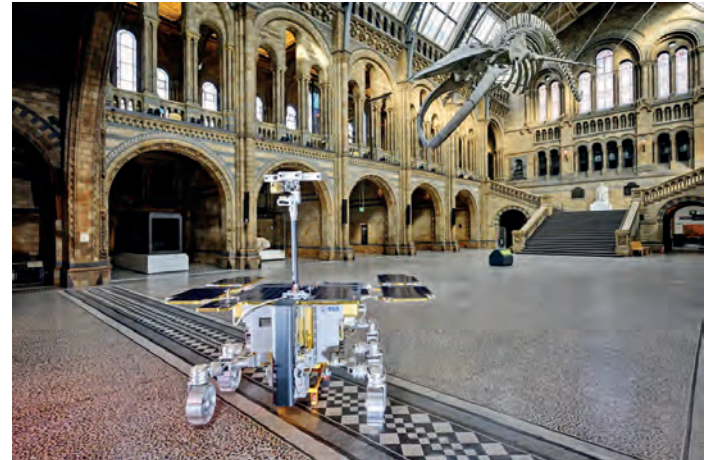
Source: NDTV

March 18

News in Pictures



Baku, Azerbaijan
Nowruz celebrations at the Fire Temple of Baku in Surakhany district. Nowruz is one of the most important holidays of the Turkic world and considered the harbinger of spring.



London, UK
A prototype of the Rosalind Franklin Mars rover from the European Space Agency is displayed below the skeleton of a Blue Whale named 'Hope' in the Hintze Hall of the Natural History Museum. The museum's new exhibition – 'Space: Could Life Exist Beyond Earth?' – will allow visitors to touch and hold real pieces of the Moon, Mars and meteorites, as well as see groundbreaking pieces of technology such as this prototype Martian vehicle.

March 17



London, UK
Orthodox Jewish children dressed in costumes celebrate the annual holiday of Purim, a Jewish festival commemorating the survival of the Jews' who were marked for death in ancient Persia.



Rafah, Gaza
Palestinians flee their homes after the Israeli army issued evacuation orders for a number of neighbourhoods.

Lujan, Argentina
A giant balloon with an image of Pope Francis is seen at the Basilica of Our Lady of Lujan, in Lujan, Buenos Aires province, while worshippers gather there to pray for his swift recovery, as he has been hospitalized for over a month with double pneumonia.



Rome, Italy
Soldiers take part in a ceremony to mark the country's Day of National Unity.

Dublin, Ireland
Revellers attend the St. Patrick's Day parade in Dublin.



Bangkok, Thailand
A worker harvests sea salt.



Faridpur, Bangladesh
Farmers harvest onion seeds.



Sources: The Guardian & Reuters